

ALL YOU NEED IS



By Yu Shanshan

Whether Valentine's Day is an official festival in China is not important. On this day, people are aware of the importance of being together with their lovers, or savoring the loneliness of solitude. *Beijing Today's* special issue provides a "4S" service for people both in and out of love. Both may find something interesting in the four sections: Surprise, Stories, Sites and Styles.

What's OUT when you wish to surprise to your love? Have a look!

Page 2

What do you hate most about him or her in a cross-national romance?

Page 5

The best places in Beijing to make an encounter or to arrange a date or proposal

Pages 8-9

Try your luck on matchmaker Web sites

Page 10

Foods and oils to power up your passion

Page 13

A test for singles who wish upon a star

Page 15

Newsroom's list of "musts" for a lover

Page 16

Valentine out's...

By Gan Tian/Wang Chuyang

Are you trying to impress or depress your lover on Valentine's Day. *Beijing Today* offers several suggestions for you to consider.



Top 6: Red roses

The number one Valentine's gift is red roses. It has become a boring cliché. Gentlemen, ladies do not like flowers anymore, no matter how lovely they may be. How many girls have found a pretty vase of red roses outside their bedroom door the morning of Valentine's Day. The number of lovely ladies who answer yes is staggering. On this special love day, you will also find red roses in the center of every table in every restaurant, in the homes of families, on mailboxes, as window treatments – the list could go on forever. So, how can you expect red roses to make your lover feel special? This gift is definitely out!

Top 7: Chocolate

Are you still a kid? Are you still living in the 18th century? Chocolate? No! Save that treat for your grandmother! What about your girlfriend's precious waistline? A Dove chocolate bar spells trouble. If you are still thinking about chocolate, then you are way off base. And for the girls, you should know that chocolate is expensive on Valentine's Day. Save your money. Chocolate is out!



Top 5: Candles

Why are there candles everywhere on Valentine's? We are in the modern age and we have electricity! If you want to show your lover a surprise, just dim the lights. Only light candles during a black-out! Snuff them out!

Top 4: Romance movies

Yet another huge cliché on Valentine's Day is the romance movie. Although I cannot speak on behalf of the entire female population, I will risk it and say, this is what women really want.

Not to say there is anything wrong with this gift, but it just represents all that is so boringly characteristic of Valentine's Day. As a new approach, there is always Build-A-Bear. This is novel, and your cliché teddy bear comes dressed and with underwear.

"There are two types of romance movies: those with the stars meeting and falling in love early in the flick, and those who don't fall until the end of the movie. The sooner they meet, the sooner they have sex. Sex is a prerequisite in romance movie law and usually happens after the second date, if not sooner. No movie couple has ever waited for sex until their relationship develops," are netizen wrote.



Top 3: Dinner

Every restaurant has its "special menu" for crazed lovers on Valentine's Day. From 100 to 10,000 yuan, gets you everything from ice-cream to seafood. This special "love" day is a huge money-maker for most eateries. If you want to spend hours looking for a parking space or want to instill acid reflux or want to battle your lover for the toilet, then, indeed, go out to a restaurant for that special Valentine's dinner!

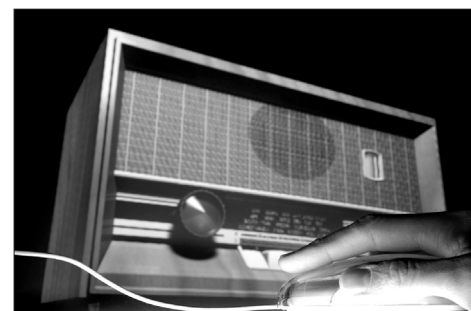


Top 1: The big question

In one of the episodes from the Japanese TV series *Top Caster*, the boy asked the girl to marry him. He takes her down to a specific tree, and then climbs the tree, turns on a switch, and ta-dah – the tree comes alive with dozens of beautiful lights. The boy softly utters several corny lines, all leading up the fateful question, "Will you marry me?" It doesn't get much cornier than this on Valentine's Day!

Top 2: Radio Ga-Ga

Radio, the final love frontier! First, find the right station. Good luck getting through to the disc-jockey! If you do finally talk to the program host, remember to stroke his ego: it may help get your song request played. When you turn on the radio at that specially promised moment, you will hear you and your lover's name, announced, but then may discover that he has not played your requested song, but something like, *You Ain't Nothing But A Hound Dog*, or *You Are So Vain*!



Photos by Liu Ying

... and in's

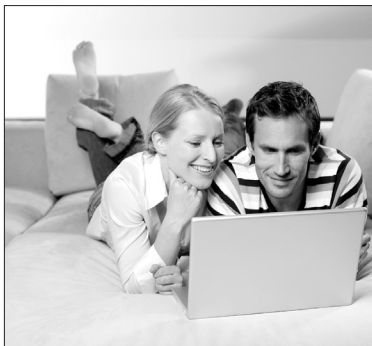


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Surprise

Top 6: Start lover's blog

Words fly away, but writing remains. Though you do not normally write words down, you can still start a blog for your lover. Tell him or her you have already started your first diary about your love. Use your first dating date as the password, or use his or her name as the blog title. This does not make you are a corny romantic. Your sweetheart will be moved to tears.



Top 7: Heart-shaped pizza

I don't cook, but my roommate does. He makes a heart-shaped pizza for his lover on Valentine's Day. If you are not so handy in the kitchen, you can always call your local pizza shop and order a heart-shaped pizza from them. And just because someone else made it, do not think of it as being impersonal. It's still a one-of-a-kind gift from the heart.

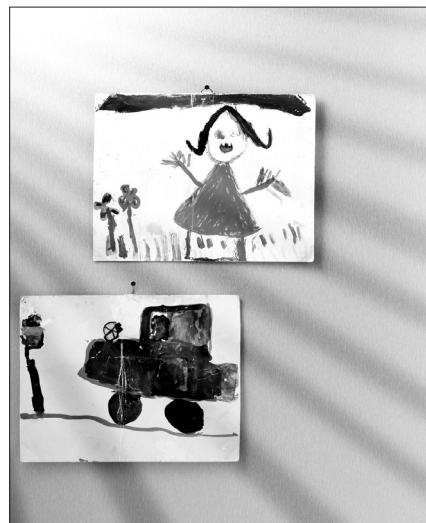
Top 5: Secret album

You must have a cell phone with a camera, right? Take some of your lover's photos without his or her knowledge. When he or she is talking, laughing, shedding tear, or cooking. Print them out, and then make them into an album. Then give it to her on this special day, and say, "You are the only person I care about in this world."



Top 3: Cook

Taking your lover out for dinner is outmoded now, but cooking for him or her is absolutely in fashion. Don't hesitate to make something delicious, even if you only know how to make instant noodles. By the way, if your lover does this for you, never let on that it does not taste that great. Grin and bear it. Remember, the motivation was love. By the way, the restaurant My Humble House, located in Oriental Plaza, provides cooking classes. Take your lover there. Learning how to cook together is another special thing to do!



Top 4: Paint a portrait

Imagine what your lover likes and paint a portrait. Great artists are usually great lovers, too. If you are not good with a brush, how about a pencil? If none of these talents are your strength, simply paint a flower for your love and say that he or she is the flower in your heart.

Top 1: Mixed CD

Find some love songs which you and your lover both enjoy. Celine Dion's "My Heart Will Go On" is totally out. Try some Daniel Powter or Club 8. If these are not your cup of tea, find some songs which remind your love of you, or you can even record some of your lover's voice clips! Burn them onto a CD for him or her. Simple and sweet.



Top 2: Love notes scrapbook

Take all the love notes you've written and either put them in a scrapbook or hole punch them and bind them with. If you have not written any love notes, write one every day up until Valentine's Day or the day before and present them as your personal love notebook. He will love reading how you worship him, and it is a keepsake he can read whenever he wants. If you not have a soft touch for writing, compile some poetry that reminds you of them or song lyrics that are reminders of the times you have shared with your sweetheart.



Tips on how to make Valentine's Day IN

- 1 You should always remember, being special is being different. Prepare your lover a unique Valentine's Day present.
- 2 DIY is the best choice. True love comes from the hand.
- 3 If you cannot find some good ideas, go to the iMart creative market. There are always good ideas there. How about opening a shopping window for him or her?
- 4 Avoid crowded places, keeping in mind that this special day belongs to only you and your partner.
- 5 Valentine's Day always arrives during Spring Festival, so prepare something for the New Year, which means a new start.

Photos by Liu Ying

Qixi-Chinese Valentine's Day

By Li Jing

The celebration of Qixi, Chinese Valentine's Day, has much deeper roots than the western one. The earlier records of Qixi celebration date back to Han Dynasty.

Also called the Double Seven Festival or Daughters' Day, Qixi is celebrated on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month. The touching legends behind the festival have most young Chinese couples eager to celebrate both days.

Romantic story

The festival comes in mid-summer, when the sky is dotted with stars. If you raise your head and gaze up, you can see the stars of the Milky Way galaxy running north to south in what the ancients called the Silver River.

Chinese people believe that Vega, east of the Milky Way, is Zhi Nu. The constellation Aquila, on the west side of the Milky Way, is where Niu Lang waits for his wife. Their love story is one of the four most famous in China.

Zhi Nu was said to be the youngest of seven daughters of the Queen of Heaven. She weaved beautiful clouds in the sky with her sisters. Niu Lang, on the other hand, was a poor orphan who lived a terrible life with nothing but his old cow to keep him company.

However, the cow was a magic cow, and helped Niu Lang to meet Zhi Nu, who descended from the heavens in secret to be with him.

The several years that passed on Earth were only a few days in the heavens. The two lived happily together and had two children.

Unfortunately, the God of Heaven soon found out and ordered the Queen of Heaven to retrieve Zhi Nu.

With the help of the celestial cattle, Niu Lang was able to follow Zhi Nu into heaven. He was about to reach his wife when the Queen showed up. Using her hairpin, she cut a line between the two that became a Silver River through the heavens.

But the barrier could not separate the lovers. Each waited patiently on the riverbank, believing that their love could withstand separation.

The Queen of Heaven was eventually moved by their loyalty and allowed them to meet for one day each year on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month. That night, the magpies would spread their wings to form a bridge across the river where Niu Lang and Zhi Nu could meet.

History of celebration

Scholars know Qixi originated in the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD220). Historical documents from the Eastern Jin Dynasty (371-420) mention the festival, while records from the Tang Dynasty (618-907) describe grand evening banquets held by Emperor Taizong and his concubines.

By the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1279-1368) dynasties, special articles for the Qixi were seen being sold at markets throughout the capital. The bustling markets demonstrated the significance of the festival.

Poets composed hundreds of verses about Qixi. One of the most famous poems, "Fairy of the Magpie Bridge," was written by Qin Guan of the Song Dynasty (960-1279). "The eternal love between us shall withstand time," is its

most-quoted verse.

Chinese ceremonies

Although both the Qixi and the Western Valentine's Day are dedicated to love,

Qixi places less emphasis on chocolates and roses.

Chinese girls prepare fruits, melons and incense as offerings to Zhi Nu to pray for skills in needlecraft and satisfactory husbands. In the evening, couples sit outdoors to gaze at the stars. Chinese grannies say that if you stand under a grapevine, you eavesdrop on Zhi Nu and Niu Lang.

Some of these traditional customs are still observed in rural areas of China, but have been diluted in urban cities. However, the legend of Niu Lang and Zhi Nu remains etched in people's hearts.

In recent years, urban youths have celebrated it as Chinese Valentine's Day. Qixi was transmitted to Japan during its feudal period.

NE•TIGER's Hua Fu, defining Chinese style

Japan has the kimono, Korea has the hanbok, and India has the sari. What should people wear during China's traditional festivals?

In this month of double-celebration, Spring Festival and Valentine's Day, NE•TIGER presents Hua Fu: a way for Chinese women to appreciate their national identity in formal occasions. The 2008 NE•TIGER Hua Fu Series rebuilds the Chinese gown and heralds a cultural renaissance of Chinese dress.

Five historical colors

The series is divided into five color sections: red, green, yellow, blue and dark. Each can be traced back to ancient dynasties. Black was the favored color in Qin Dynasty (221-206BC), Blue in Nanbei Dynasty (420-589) and green in Song Dynasty (960-1279). Yellow and red need no introduction, as they have

long been the symbolic colors of China. Designers try to use black, blue and blackish green as grounding to form comparisons with exquisite embroideries, beads and Swarovski crystals.

Traditional fabric techniques

NE•TIGER hopes to refresh the clothing culture using Jin and Xiu as the materials to realize the five colors renaissance in a new look. Jin refers to the Yun Brocade fabric with 1,500 years of history, which has been classified as UNESCO intangible heritage. Its handmade Zhuanghua process can only turn out five centimeters daily. The saying an "inch of Yun Brocade is an inch of gold" emphasize its luxurious value. Xiu is traditional Chinese weaving techniques, integrating embroideries such as Su,

Yue, Xiang and Shu. Gowns made using this manual technique takes several months to finish. Patterns like fans, lamps and loricae, which bear deep Chinese traditional fingerprints, are used to make the series both elegant and sexy.

Fusion wave

The cultures of the 55 Chinese minorities also provide inspiration for Hua Fu. Apart from Han, people can find typical styles of the Tibetan, Miao, Dai, Yi and Naxi minorities incorporated in Hua Fu dresses. Gorgette, damask, Italian baldachin, lace and Swarovski crystal are used to restate the western gown, corsage, pleat skirt and fish skirt - NE•TIGER brings western molds, modern fashion and solid clipping technology to perfectly fit the Chinese woman's body.

(By Yu Shanshan)



Starcrossed cross-cultural lovers

By Annie Wei

The image of Chinese people dating foreigners is no longer plagued by prejudices of the past. For local Gen Xers, who have a global view and grew up in a more multicultural environment, cultural conflicts can carry chances to more deeply explore their relationships.

Beijing Today has a few funny and fascinating experience from interviewees who have had or are having a cross-relationship.

Ignorant

Some people I know do not understand what a relationship is. A hilarious experience was when I was freaked out by a 17-year-old Chinese girl in Shanghai last year. She kept calling me and stalking me. She might have thought I was her boyfriend. In reality, I was just her tutor. We never did anything – not even holding hands.

– G.W, 27, a US student

Possessive

My Chinese is good enough that I rarely have any misunderstandings with my girlfriend. My main problem is that Chinese women are too possessive. At the start of my relationship, she called me 10 times a day. She wanted to know where I was, what I was doing and whom I was with. What the hell? I was very busy at work all day long. I would not return her calls, text messages or emails. She was pissed off.

– F. E, 35,

an French-Italian accountant

Yes or No

Sometimes, when my Chinese girlfriend says yes, she means no. She thought problems could be solved later, so she would never mention when anything was wrong. Communication is very important in a relationship, especially with someone from a totally different cultural background.

– Alan Douglas, 35,
an investment banker

Independence

Chinese girls like being with their parents, similar to people from southern Europe. I know many Chinese girls who have good jobs and a high income, but they stay at home even into their 30s. I can understand that they are single and prefer living with their parents, but it is still strange to me. I do not feel comfortable dating a girl who is over 30 but still lives with her parents.

– Tom, 33, a British architect

Gifts

In Chinese culture, men tend to express love for a woman by taking care of her, buying things, doing things for

her and that's just not what I am used to. I do not mean Chinese women are materialistic. They just think that the man doesn't love them when he won't do any of those things.

– Adrian, 28,

an Austrian businessman

Intimacy

Chinese women always want to shower before getting intimate. It is ridiculous! Sex is a spontaneous thing that you



do not plan a half an hour before. The only solution seems to be to look for a foreign girlfriend or adapt to how women do things here.

– Steven, a former foreign correspondent in Beijing

Christmas

If a western guy asks you to have Christmas with his family, it means he is very serious about your relationship. If he never asks, it could mean you are not even his girlfriend yet.

– Shirley Wang, PR manager of a local NGO

Food

I am from Guangdong Province. When I suggest eating things like pig liver, my French boyfriend thinks it is disgusting. I do not like that attitude. Why can't he even pretend to like it? We eat dog meat, but I always have to say I have never had



Despite all the troubles inherent in cross-cultural love, it can be a road to wedded bliss.

CFP Photos

Chinese men vs Expat girls

It's easy to find couples who are expat men and Chinese girls, but not as easy to find expat girls and Chinese guys. But it's also true that more and more Chinese young men have interests in dating expat girls, Beijing Today talked with some of the coolest Chinese men in town for tips.

Rule No.1 Homework – Watch Sex and the City

Reason: There are things Chinese girls may never ask for, but western girls do. That is something about which traditional Chinese girls have a certain level of understanding, but the western girls do not! It is hard to give a clear example now, so just watch the episodes.

Rule No 2 Practice – Make friends with expat guys

I have lots of expat guys as good friends. The more expat friends you have or hang out with, the more you know about them and easily adjust to the way they think. And you know guys talk about girls all the time. When a western girl sees you are friendly to other expat guys, she will feel there is more things in common between herself and you.

Rule No 3 – Be yourself

Being yourself means being cool. So there is no need to bend to western opinion all the time. In China, there are lots of lousy expats who are total losers.

it when I am in front of his friends.

– Lulu, translator

Seeing the parents

It's not a big deal that my boyfriend brought me to see his parents. But in the Chinese culture, meeting one's parents is serious business. It means the couple will marry some day. I meet my boyfriend's parents in New York whenever I go abroad for a month of vacation. This Spring Festival, he asked to meet my parents back in Hangzhou. I told him that if we are not planning to get married, I would be the laughing stock of my neighborhood. He could not understand it. Thankfully the heavy snows buried his plans this year, so I can eek by for at least another 365 days.

– Felicia, a bar owner



Ways to make your love work

By Huang Daohen

Break out the roses, chocolates and romantic candlelit dinners – Valentine's Day is around the corner and it is time to celebrate love. However, it is likely you and your significant other will spend part of the day at work,

since this year's Day of Lovers lands in the middle of the week.

If you are looking for more time together, why not work together in the boardroom? Below are some working couples' ideas for a romantic Valentine's Day.

Operating an online shop

Lots of young people quit their jobs to pursue their own small-scale businesses. Opening shops online is a favorite way for many lovers to work together.

Zhou Miao, 24, from Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, and her boyfriend Yang Yi work at what many would consider an idyllic job: one that does not drag you away from your beloved for eight hours every day.

The two were classmates in college and found jobs after graduating in 2004. Zhou worked as a secretary in a law company and Yang worked as an IT engineer. However, commute times and distance left them little time to meet up, and both decided to quit.

Taobao, one of the main online auction sites, was only just starting to gain popularity. Zhou suggested opening an online shop to sell bags. The two rented a house in Shanghai and opened an account with

Taobao.com to start their business.

The bags were sourced from Zhou's uncle, who ran his own bag business in Wenzhou.

"It was really difficult for us the first two months, because no one knew about our shop and we lost nearly all the money we had," Zhou said. Lingering doubts about online dealing in the consumer base contributed to the couple's tough times.

But life is much easier now. Their shop on Taobao.com, Yikemiao, is flagged as a five-star credit shop, the site's highest rank. The two service 20 to 30 online orders each day.

Mailing out orders, haggling over prices online and mailing out the goods has become a part of daily life.

"Our schedule is more flexible and we have more time together," Yang said.

The couple plans to take Valentine's Day off for a romantic getaway.



Make time for your romance by making your own hours.

Managing office love

For unmarried lovers, running a business together may seem romantic, but there are pros and cons to working with your lover.

"It's good as long as she is the wife and not the mistress," Maryamie Chen, an office lady who works with her husband in a consulting company, said.

Chen and her husband Zhang Wei worked together before and have just started to work together again. "The last few days have been great. We wake up together and cuddle before we have to get ready to go to work," she said.

Every day the couple commutes together and holds hands on the way to the office.

The morning daily meeting is a routine in the company. Chen said she feels good that they can sit together at the meetings; go out to lunch with coworkers and commute home together after work. "It's nice to brainstorm about work during the

commute, and it's exciting to work on projects together," Chen said.

However, blurring the lines between private and professional life can be tricky, she said.

Couples are each other's best allies. No one will work harder for you than your own family, as their livelihood depends on your success. Knowing each other's weaknesses and strengths also helps you complete each other.

On the other hand, familiarity sometimes makes lovers take each other for granted. "It feels like we are together all the time," Chen said.

She plans to spend time apart this Valentine's Day. "Whether it's a 30 minute walk or a weekend away with friends, make sure you allow yourself some solitary time," she said.

Though managing love in the office may be tough at times, there is more sweet than bitter. Try a temporary job together.

Try a temporary job together

Working with your significant other may not always be a pleasant experience. If Valentine's Day is about being together, why not try a "temporary" job, like working on a project together. Some projects are built for two.

Selling flowers

Most men hate Valentine's Day because it is basically about trying to please their lady with flowers and chocolate. Instead of rushing to prepare a bouquet, why not try something different? Don't buy flowers: sell them.

Experts suggest selling wooden flowers. Many people prefer to buy wooden flowers because they last forever.

Selling flowers together can be exhilarating because you share in more than just the planning and the execution of the project, but you also get to show off

your love to all customers.

Volunteer

Nowadays, a Valentine's Day is more likely to encourage people to indulge in some champagne and candy. Still, here is a more meaningful way – to be volunteers with your beloved.

There are multiple ways you may attend a voluntary activity on Valentine's Day. The Beijing Charity Association, for instance, launches a one-day charity travel to an orphan school at the countryside every year. During the travel, volunteers teach and play with the homeless kids.

It's not just the other person you are playing with; it's the relationship you have built with your beloved.

Renovate together

When we say "temporary" job, we

don't mean it. To find a job is really difficult today, even if it's a temporary one. Therefore, why not just stay inside on the Valentine's Day and do something to your romantic haven. You can even make it more romantic.

The home is a big project, even installing new curtains or replacing your ratty sheets count as improvements, so put your heads together.

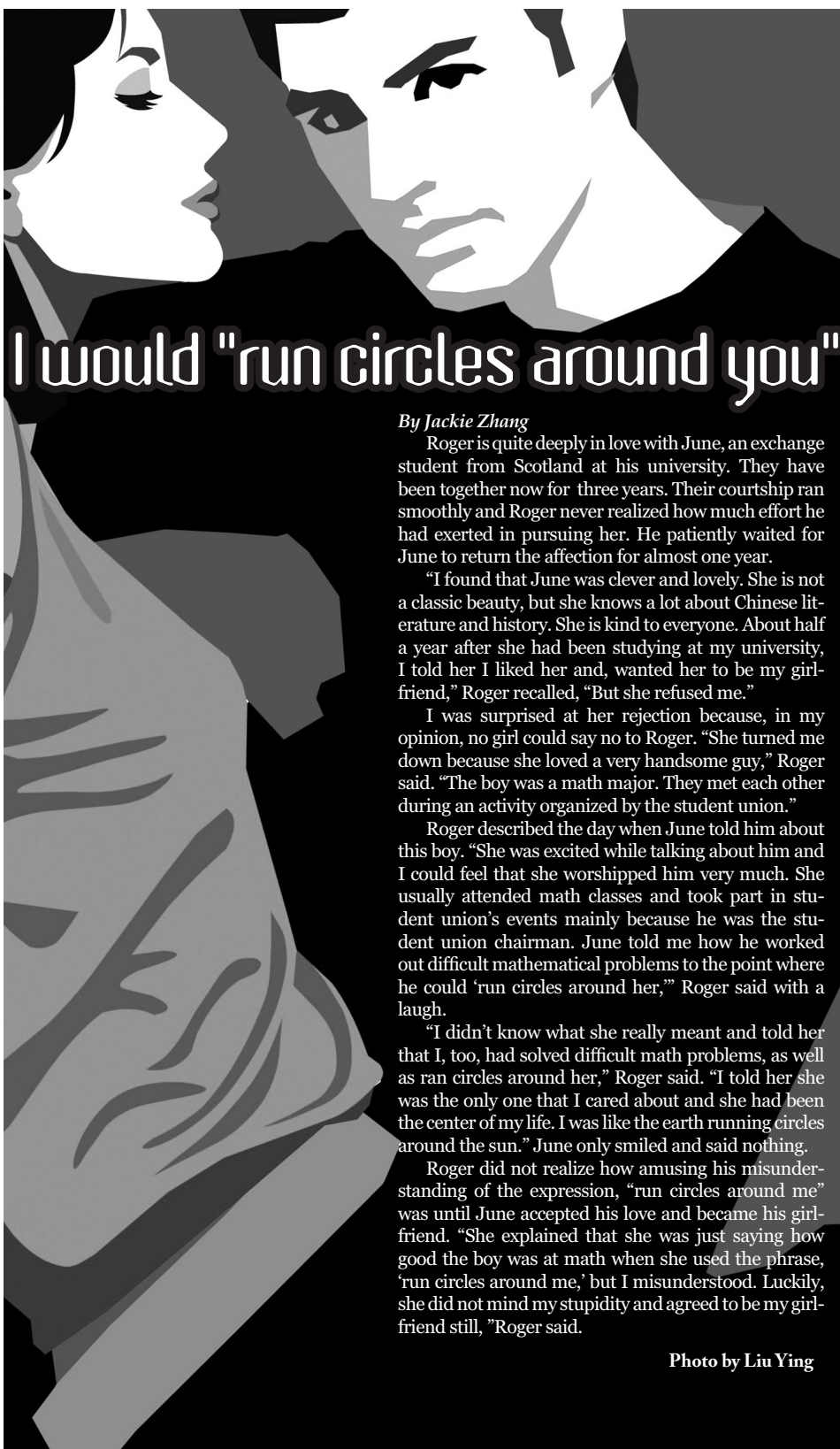
Maybe your bedroom is in good shape, but that bathroom has seen better days. Updating an aging bathroom can be as easy as changing a faucet or installing a new shower head, so don't be afraid of change.

Nurturing the home you live in simultaneously nurtures your relationship. So, invest in your nest and you will see many positive returns.



Selling flowers together may make others' love blossom.

CFP Photos



I would "run circles around you"

By Jackie Zhang

Roger is quite deeply in love with June, an exchange student from Scotland at his university. They have been together now for three years. Their courtship ran smoothly and Roger never realized how much effort he had exerted in pursuing her. He patiently waited for June to return the affection for almost one year.

"I found that June was clever and lovely. She is not a classic beauty, but she knows a lot about Chinese literature and history. She is kind to everyone. About half a year after she had been studying at my university, I told her I liked her and, wanted her to be my girlfriend," Roger recalled, "But she refused me."

I was surprised at her rejection because, in my opinion, no girl could say no to Roger. "She turned me down because she loved a very handsome guy," Roger said. "The boy was a math major. They met each other during an activity organized by the student union."

Roger described the day when June told him about this boy. "She was excited while talking about him and I could feel that she worshipped him very much. She usually attended math classes and took part in student union's events mainly because he was the student union chairman. June told me how he worked out difficult mathematical problems to the point where he could 'run circles around her,'" Roger said with a laugh.

"I didn't know what she really meant and told her that I, too, had solved difficult math problems, as well as ran circles around her," Roger said. "I told her she was the only one that I cared about and she had been the center of my life. I was like the earth running circles around the sun." June only smiled and said nothing.

Roger did not realize how amusing his misunderstanding of the expression, "run circles around me" was until June accepted his love and became his girlfriend. "She explained that she was just saying how good the boy was at math when she used the phrase, 'run circles around me,' but I misunderstood. Luckily, she did not mind my stupidity and agreed to be my girlfriend still," Roger said.

Photo by Liu Ying

Dating dilemma

By Annie Wei

Adam is one of my closest friends from the US. I knew him four years ago through his ex-girlfriend Serena.

However, they broke up after they left China. Now she has another boyfriend and it is Adam's first time in China without her.

Adam was visiting friends in Beijing so I hung out with them as much as I could.

I loved being around them. I felt like I was back in high school. We sat on the floor, watching DVDs, drinking soda and eating potato chips.

The other guys did not gossip with me that much about their relationships but Adam did. He openly talked about who he was seeing in Shanghai right now, his Weird dating experiences in China and how materialistic Shanghai girls were for refusing to date a poor guy like him. Although I did not agree with some of his opinions about women, I said nothing and remained a good listener.

The other day, Adam asked me, "Will you be my date at Serena's wedding?" I was shocked.

I knew he was still very upset about Serena leaving him for another, but he should have known by now my strict dating rules. Firstly, I love him like a brother. Secondly, dating my best girlfriend's ex so violates my own rules. If any of my girlfriends dared to date my man, no matter if he was an ex from a million years ago, she would be out of my address book immediately. And I would insist my other girlfriends remove his name as well.

Understanding the dating culture between China and other countries is very different and I did not jump up and shout at him like I normally would.

"What do you mean by 'date'?" I asked.

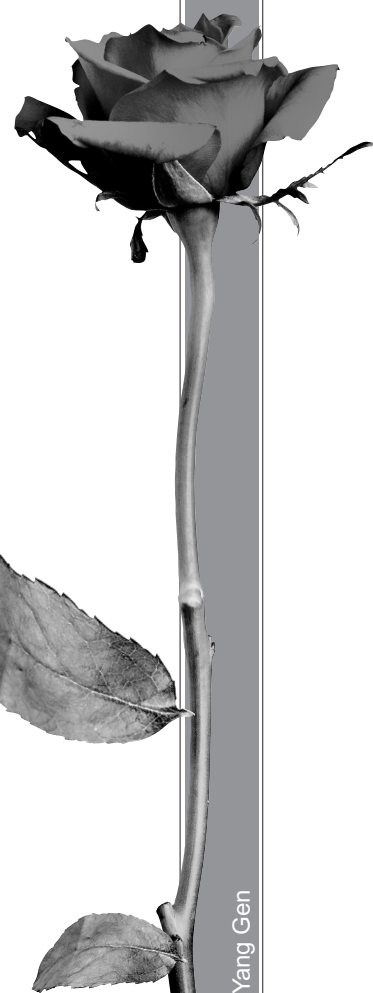
"In this case, date does not mean dating as a girlfriend or boyfriend. It just means to accompany someone to a formal event as a friend," Adam said.

Speak love at web

Do you know how to express your love on the Internet? Here are some suggestions!

(*^?^*) kiss me
(^_^)@ presenting flowers
(*^(*^*) shy
!(^*^*)! very shy
=@~@= blushing
@(-_-) a secret
~@^_^@~ lovely
^o^// lovelier
~*~*~ shy girl
~~>_<~~ crying
N-N looking at you
^_~ a wink
o can't take my eyes off you
<@_@> drunk
o_o watching you
^o^ proud
O_O surprise!
-_- crest fallen

(By Gan Tian)



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Where love ha

By He Jianwei

A scene is critical to every memory. Even years later, passing a familiar site can conjure up those turbulent emotions from when you first met, dated or proposed.

As Valentine's Day dates and everyone considers the following

No 3 terminal building at Beijing Capital International Airport



Photo by Guang Niu

Encounter and proposal

Love stories always have an airport scene. At the end of this month, the No 3 terminal building at Beijing Capital International Airport (BCIA) will open for its first trial.

Designed by British architect Norman Foster, the building attempts to combine traditional architectural elements with modern technology. Its red columns and muted gold roof are symbolic of Beijing's history of imperial palaces and temples.

The new terminal building is not like other architecture you have seen in the other airports home and abroad. In the building, many traditional Chinese architectural elements have been adopted.

The landmark buildings in the new terminal building are typical Chinese design. You can see the classical gardens of Suzhou, which recreate natural landscapes in miniature, and the ancient imperial gardens.

In front of the Nine Dragon Screen would be a great place to meet your lover, or at the miniature of Yuanmingyuan Palace's Dashuifa, Grand Waterworks.

The ancient architecture contrasts with the speed of modern life. The new terminal building provides more convenient facilities for passengers and gives single passengers a more comfortable atmosphere to reunite with their love.

The new terminal will boost the airports yearly passenger capacity from 35 million to 82 million passengers.

Beijing Today Art Museum

Encounter and Dating

Within the circle of the CBD and east to third ring road, a row of foam rubber sculptures sits on the rooftop to mark the Beijing Today Art Museum.

In the gallery or museum, taking photos may be forbidden, but conversation is permitted. You can easily find a fellow art fan with common interests.



Photo by Zhuo Ensen

For those who already have a boyfriend or girlfriend, it is the cheapest but most romantic way to invite your lover to view an exhibition. Compared with a play, dance or concert, most exhibitions are free or charge a reasonable admission fee.

Of course, if the premise is "He or she loves art," do not hesitate to bring him or her to the museum.

The museum was once a big boiler room of the Beijing Beer Brewery. Architect Wang Hui brought modern elements to the huge building based on preserving its old architectures to record the history of the city.

Wang exaggerated the trapezium and metal barrier in the old architecture and created a metal stairway like a big Z. Everyone can see the stairway, but some cannot spot the entrance. Only when you draw near is it visible.

Artist Wang Jianwei presented an installation *Viewing the Exhibition*. In his work, several foam rubber people sit in a row along the eaves. They view everyone going in and out of the museum, and bear witness to your love.

Where: Building 4, 32, Baiziwan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: Daily 10 am - 5 pm

Tel: 5876 0600 ext 6035

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ay nears, couples plan romantic dinners, singles hope for romantic
e is looking for the right place. If you do not have any plans yet, con-
places.

Place



ren in *The Place*

sal
date Your Vision," the sky screen, is The
number one highlight.

sky screen is 250 meters long and 30
wide and is suspended six stories above
a.

as designed by Jeremy Railton, presi-
Entertainment Design Corporation, who
original designer of the Fremont Street
ence in Las Vegas, the world's largest
reen.

year, a retired football player proposed
girlfriend under the sky screen and their
g was held under it last June.

Valentine's Day, The Place will run a
f videos to celebrate. Your lover will be
when he or she hears an "I love you" or
ou marry me" while watching romance
under the screen.

ere: east gate of building D, global trade
n 9, Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District
8595 1755

Two Lovers Café



Two Lovers Café

Dating and Proposal

By Wang Chuyang

The Two Lovers Café, with only one table to seat two lovers, is worthy of its name. Wen Zhigang, the café's investor, makes couples' dreams come true in this small restaurant hideaway. It is an intimate nook where wishes become reality.

"We wanted to give each other something special, and this was it," Wen said: space enough for two. Taking any requests from his customers, Wen masterminds some of the most romantic dinners in Beijing. You can design the ambience by choosing the tablecloth, candlesticks and background music. The waiters are all very professional, and will cater to your every whim, at your signal they will bring flower, start the violin music and even put on your favorite movie. "We've had a lot of proposals, a lot of emotions in this place," he said.

Where: 49, Xisi Dongdajie, to the east of Shengli Cinema, Xicheng District

Open: 11:30am -10:30pm

Average cost: 1,680 yuan for two persons

Tel: 6617 4200 (Reservation only)

Email: info@your-bar.com

Space for Imagination



Space for Imagination

Dating and Proposal

By Wang Chuyang / Gan Tian

The cafe Space for Imagination has a beautiful Chinese name: Hezi, Chinese for "box."

Located in an area popular with students, the café knows its customers. A wall in the middle of the cafe has a well-stocked bookshelf. Each table seats two – especially designed for you and your lover.

The cafe is reminiscent of student life and has many touchstones on display. It even holds film screening, English corners and book clubs. With a generous selection of coffees, Space for Imagination provides an intimate atmosphere for the customer and movie buff alike.

"The first time you go, it may be difficult to find without a friend; the second time, you will want to bring others; the third time, your friends will take their friends," a customer wrote on the cafe's bulletin board.

Where: 5, Xiwangzhuang, Shuangqing Lu, Haidian District

Tel: 6279 1280

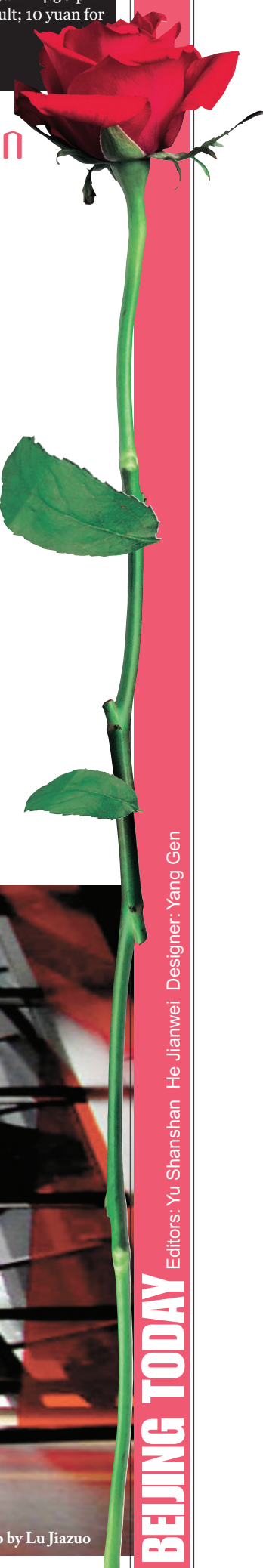


Photo by Lu Jiazuo

Surviving Valentine's Day as a single

By Huang Daohen

For many, Valentine's Day is the pinnacle of the romantic year. It is a time for loved ones to exchange all manner of gifts, including chocolates, flowers, cuddly toys and cards loaded with mots d'amour. It is the one day of the year when you feel wanted.

However, for perpetual bachelors or those of us embracing spinsterhood with open arms, it can be the most cruel date on the calendar. So what to do with this day? Batten down the hatches, hide under the duvet and emerge anew on the 15th? Here are ways to survive.

Ladies for lease, no love attached

By Gan Tian

Ruan Li, 21, a junior English major, enjoyed the special Spring Festival.

Though her family was in Beijing, she went to Zhengzhou, Henan Province, for the occasion. She did not know anyone in that city, but she stayed in a stranger's home and received many hongbao, red envelopes with money inside.

It may seem odd, but it was all part of the job: Ruan rented herself out as a temporary girlfriend.

"I realized people were doing this while I surfing online before winter vacation," she said, stirring her coffee. Ruan is a beautiful young woman; lights outside the cafe reflected off of her smooth, shining black hair. Though a university junior, her mind is much more mature.

Ruan first saw a post written by a man with the handle Watermelon. He said he needed someone to pretend to be his girlfriend in front of his family, a service for which he was willing to pay 6,000 yuan. Ruan phoned him to suggest herself.

"I certainly did not let others know about this," she replied, saying she did not want everyone to think of her as a "material girl."

Then she met Watermelon.

"When I saw him, I knew why he couldn't find a girlfriend," Ruan said. He was a short

1.6 meters, spoke with a strong Henan accent and his mouth housed a reek only 6,000 yuan could mask.

His real name was Wang Dakuai, 28. Wang's family believed he should marry at age 24, and his mother told him that if he did not bring home a girlfriend this year, he could not return home for Spring Festival.

After a few minutes of frustration, Wang struck on an idea: if he could not find a girlfriend, why not rent one?

"He was cold and could not make his thoughts clear. He asked me to remember all his personal information. His birthday, his blood type, his sign – who cares about that? But for 6,000 yuan, I had to!" Ruan said.

When the agreement was sketched out, the two set off for Wang's hometown by airplane. Ruan spent five days there and got her 6,000 yuan. With the hongbao his uncles and aunts gave her, she netted another 2,000 yuan, plus a gold ring given to her by Wang's mother. The ring was later returned to Wang.

Girlfriend rental is getting more popular among big city college students who are pressured not to return home alone. To rent a girlfriend usually costs a single man 1,000 to 6,000 yuan, excluding traffic fees and other expenses.

Steal the show as a single



Do not worry about being singled out at this party if you go dateless.

By Zhang Dongya

You think Valentine's Day is just for couples? Not quite! It is more and more popular for singles to celebrate the day together. Colorful posters to advertise "Singles' Parties" can be found all over the city's pubs and bars. It seems bachelors are even more fascinated

with the holiday than hot couples.

Single Pin'er get together on Valentine's Day to battle loneliness and boredom. They go Dutch, enjoy some preferential treatment and make friends. Some have so much fun singing, dancing and laughing that even nearby couples would be jealous.

A day to hunt for lovers

By Zhang Dongya

Many people think of Valentine's Day as a day to spend with one's beloved, but with all the singles left out in the cold, it's a great time to go hunting for that special someone! The Chinese *qinren*, to hunt for someone, sounds strikingly like *qingren*, "lover." For many, the name of the day is synonymous with the hunt for love.

Young people who want to say goodbye to

single life can join a dating club on the special day. One way to do that is with the power of the Internet. Meet someone, talk and meet for real, or find a group organizing a speed dating event. Most attendees keep the obvious intentions in mind: the hunt for Mr or Mrs Right.

It is one way to make Valentine's Day 2008 a meaningful holiday, and perhaps a meaningful day for years to come.

If you strike out in love, a rented girlfriend is one way to not go home empty handed.

CFP Photos

Be healthy together

By Annie Wei

In selecting a boyfriend or future husband, take into consideration his lifestyle and gene pool. Growing older and wiser, sophisticated urban women know that a spouse's health really matters to your happiness. Here are some wise habits for couples to maintain a healthy physical and mental state.

Swimming

Zhou Baoling, 55, a retired worker and her husband went swimming together in the local river for four years. Since their daughter left home for university 10 years ago, Zhou said keeping herself healthy was the best thing she could do for her daughter.

"She can focus better on her studies and career if she knows we are both healthy and happy," Zhou said.

After her husband retired four years ago, Zhou persuaded him to go swimming with her.

"We went swimming almost every day from 4 to 6 pm from April to October," Zhou said.

As they swim in the local river instead of a public swimming pool, they learned to keep an eye out for each other regarding safety issues, which enhances their relationship and brings them closer.

"Exercise is really good for couples like us," Zhou said. As people get older, their health is not as good. Zhou's husband used to eat little and had a bad temper. Now he is much more out-going, happier and has made new friends among other couples who swim in the river as well. "He's even started to bring flowers home," Zhou said.

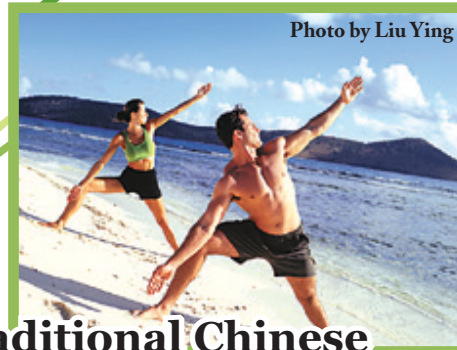


Photo by Liu Ying

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM)

More and more people agree that traditional Chinese medicine is quite positive as a preventive medical aid, they turn to traditional Chinese massages for relaxation.

However, in a hectic city like Beijing, many people have the money but not the time to get a good massage.

For anyone who goes to Taipan or Bodhi, they know that a massage up and down the spine is a typical but efficient way to relieve a cold, insomnia or tight muscles.

In traditional Chinese medicine, the line is called *Pangguang* meridian-foot taiyang. It helps the whole-body's blood circulation. Although some Chinese medicine doctors say that one can help massage his own pangguang meridian-foot taiyang by rolling on the floor with something under the back, it is just not that easy to do alone. However, things are different if you have a boyfriend or girlfriend who can spend five minutes with you.

Doubles yoga

Couples joining in yoga classes together is popular today. Yoga can help a couple develop compassion and devotion towards each other. Yoga can give them a place and something to do. It makes a profound impact on one's mind and on a couple's relationship.

Some couples even build their relationship into a yoga marriage. It is a serendipitous combination in which their practice supports their marriage, and their life together enables them to devote more of themselves to yoga. According to *Yoga Journal Magazine*, in this competitive, fear-based world, when one's external environment has elements of fear in it, yoga helps him or her go inside where there is compassion and love and the capacity to cope from action rather than reaction.

Some yoga couples say that yoga is a framework for attaching themselves to their bodies and diminishing the stress and pressures of business. It also provides a common language between them.

Yoga can also provide a helpful time out when two people are at odds.

"If you take an asana break or a pranayama break, you're observing your body. In a large sense, the practice of yoga is learning to respond and not react," the *Yoga Journal* article said.

Photo by Liu Ying

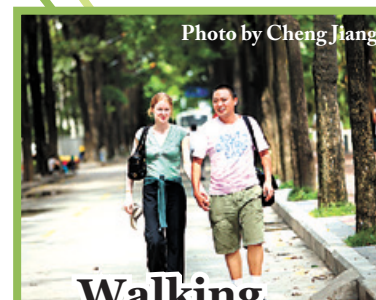


Photo by Cheng Jiang

Walking

How do we honestly spend our days? We sit in cars, at desks, in front of TVs or computers, gulp down dishes full of non-nutritional food and go to bed. More and more people agree that we do not live the way we should in terms of the amount of activity we need.

Taking a walk seems like the easiest exercise for a couple. A 30-minute walk after dinner does not only aid digestion but also enhances family communication.

What you need is two good pairs of walking shoes and clothing to suit the weather.

'Frisky' foods for lovers

By Li Fenghua

Romantic fantasies on Valentine's Day may begin with Cupid and flowers, but these romantic journeys somehow seem to end with luscious food. Throughout the annals of time, across many different cultures, certain foods have emerged with a reputation of being aphrodisiacs. For years, romantics around the world have believed that certain foods can ignite feelings of desire. So, what foods are the ones that can make this Valentine's extra frisky?

Chocolate

Did you ever wonder why Valentine's has become synonymous with chocolate? It is more than just a marketing gimmick. Chocolate is a flavorful source of quick energy and can even elevate people's moods. Chocolate contains two related alkaloid stimulants — theobromine and caffeine. It is also rich in phenylethylamine, a naturally occurring compound that has effects similar to amphetamine. The Aztecs referred to chocolate as "nourishment of the Gods." Chocolate contains more antioxidant than does red wine. The secret for passion is to combine the two. Try a glass of Cabernet with a bit of dark chocolate for a sensuous treat that could lead to who knows what.

Bananas

The banana flower has a marvelous phallic shape and is partially responsible for the popularity of the banana as an aphrodisiac. An Islamic myth tells the tale that, after Adam and Eve succumbed to the "apple," they started covering their "nude bodies" with banana leaves rather than figs. Getting real, bananas are rich in potassium and vitamin B, necessities for hormone production.

Oysters

Famous as an aphrodisiac, the oyster gets its reputation from the ritual of squeezing them out of the shell, popping them into your mouth and swallowing them whole. Oysters were documented as an aphrodisiac food by the Romans in the second century AD, as mentioned in a satire by Juvenal. He described the wanton ways of women after ingesting wine and eating "giant oysters." In reality, oysters are very nutritious and high in protein. They are rich in zinc and iron. Iron is known for its transport



of oxygen through our system and zinc is an essential element for stimulating our metabolism. Oysters also contain, on average, 18 micrograms of Vitamin B12.

Wine

A glass or two of wine can greatly enhance a romantic interlude. Wine relaxes and helps to stimulate our senses. Drinking wine can be a great experience. Let your eyes feast on the color of the liquid, caress the glass and savor the taste on your lips. Do remember that excessive alcohol can make you a tad too drowsy for

after-dinner romance. A moderate amount of wine has been said to "arouse" the senses but too much can have the opposite effect.

We've all heard the old adage, "the shortest way to a man's heart is through his stomach." This Valentine's Day, show your sweetheart how much you care by creating a romantic evening and making the romantic aphrodisiac dinner an event. Do something so incredibly special it will never be forgotten!

Raspberries and Strawberries

This is the perfect food for hand feeding your lover. Both of them invite love and are described in literature as fruit nipples. They are high in vitamin C and make a sweet, light dessert.



Photos by Liu Ying

Oil's well that ends well

By Annie Wei

Essential oils are becoming more accepted by Chinese consumers who have high awareness of skin and beauty care. However, some might not know that essential oils, the core part of aromatherapy, can improve one's sexuality. They are natural and highly efficient. Here are some essential oils that produce special levels of intimacy for lovers at this special time.



Jasmine: Bathe together

Jasmine has long been used in traditional Chinese medicine and the Indian system of Ayurveda. Both use it extensively. It helps with hormone balancing and experts recommend it be massaged into the abdomen to ease the pain of childbirth.

Jasmine is also thought of as a natural anti-depressant. Aromatherapists believe that it is especially effective for people suffering symptoms of apathy and fatigue.

They believe that jasmine works, in part, by reducing fears and opening up emotional pathways.

How to use it:

Put three drops of Jasmine, five drops of Ylang Ylang and three drops of orange essential oil in a bathtub with warm water. Jump in with your loved one or rubber duckie if no loved one is available.

Rose: flower power

Rose has long been considered the symbol of love. It seems to assist in normalizing hormonal levels and acts as a mild stimulant. Not only is it calming and relaxing, which makes it a wonderful addition to all manner of skin care products, baths and diffuser blends, but its astringent, anti-inflammatory and mildly anti-bac-

terial properties make it effective and beneficial for a range of skin conditions and complexions.

How to use it:

Mix one drop of rose, three drops of cedar wood, two drops of orange, one drop of glary sage and two drops of bergamot into the 30 milliliter base oil. And then massage it onto your partner's body.

Beautician comment

Ji Xinyu, 27, a beautician who works in a local beauty salon, says that essential oils are the most amazing products she has even seen. According to Ji, different brands have their own styles of mixing and producing effects. In terms of lovers' essential oils, Ylang Ylang essential oil and rose are two important ingredients.

The function of lovers' essential oils is to incite feelings of love, passion and attraction. Essential oils give off sensuous and arousing aromas to kindle flames of lust.

The best way to use them is to put two or three drops on some warm water with a candle heating under-

neath, Ji said.

"It creates a romantic aroma and atmosphere and normally men do not realize it's the essential oils that help make you look so attractive at night," the beautician said.

"Rose essential oil is quite amazing," Ji said, "It brings out the charm of being a woman."

High quality rose essential oil is very expensive in China, the expert said. For 10 milliliter of good rose essential oil, it can cost you several thousand yuan. And essential oils should not be stored after being opened two or three months.

"Cheap ones work, too," Ji said.

Web sites built for two

By He Jianwei

"Two become one," may be the simplest way to express deep love. With the ever-growing blog craze, many young couples have taken to blogging about the growth of their relationships.

They had two blogs, but now, they have one.



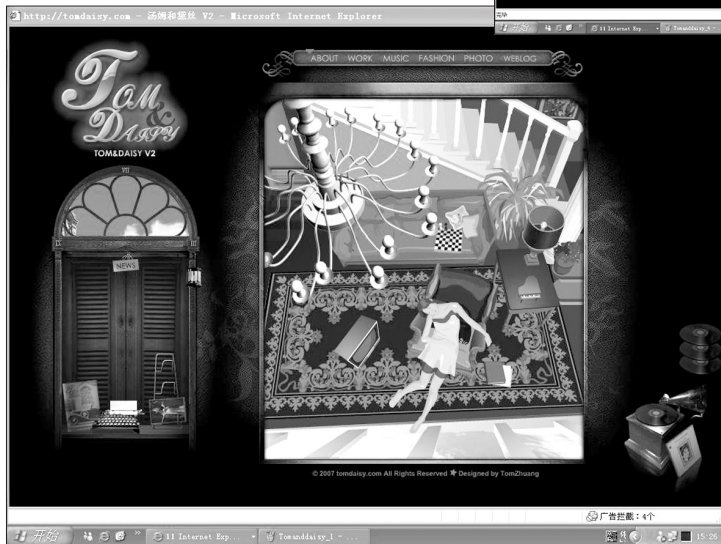
Elvita and Guan Wei's life of art elvita.bokee.com

Elvita, an accounting executive, and husband Guan Wei, a marketing manager, collect art information every month and deliver it to netizens. There are 1,200 people who receive their information. The two blog about life and art, including the exhibitions they viewed, what salons they visited and what movies they watched.



Tom and Daisy's design Web site tomdaisy.com

Daisy Chan is a fashion designer in Shanghai. Tom Zhuang is a multimedia and graphic designer. The two show their artistic works related to Web design, illustration, 3D and logo printing.

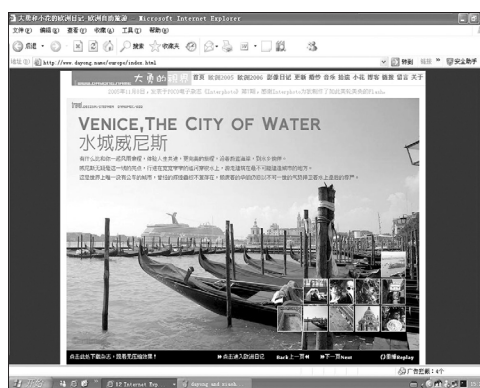


Recording love in words and photos

Yang Dawei and Lu Tingting's photo blog

labelleville.bokee.com

Yang Dawei, a photographer, and girlfriend Lu Tingting, a French gallery representative, trace their daily life in a photo blog. They post photos and write where and who took each. When Lu went to France last year, they each took one photo every day. Lu took a photo on a street in Paris and Yang took one on a street in Beijing.



Dayong and Xiaohua's travel diary dayong.name

Dayong, a Web developer, and his girlfriend Xiaohua, an office lady, travel abroad every year. While abroad, they post photos of their experiences to their blog. The two consider the blog a record of their love and travels. They visited France, Italy and Greece in 2005, Germany and Austria in 2006, and Kenya and Tanzania in 2007. Their blog has had 1.15 million visitors.

Marriage or bust!

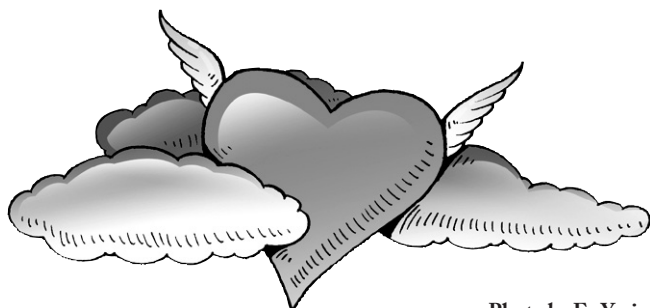


Photo by Fu Yexing

- 1. Do you think you are an old woman (or man) now?**
(Yes, go to question 4, No, go to question 2)
- 2. Do you pay special attention to your facial makeup?**
(Yes, go to 3, No, go to 10)
- 3. Was your first love in high school?**
(Yes, go to 12, No, go to 11)
- 4. Do you like to watch Sumo programs?**
(Yes, go to 6, No, go to 5)
- 5. Would you like to hold your wedding ceremony on the water?**
(Yes, go to 7, No, go to 13)
- 6. Have you ever had an "out-of-body" experience?**
(Yes, go to 13, No, go to 8)
- 7. If your chopstick falls onto the floor, do you pick it up, wipe it off and continue using it?**
(Yes, go to 15, No, go to 9)
- 8. Do you love gambling?**
(Yes, go to 15, No, go to 10)
- 9. Did you have a sexual relationship with a man (or woman) after 20?**
(Yes, go to question 17, No, go to question 19)
- 10. Do you like the smell of coffee more than its taste.**
(Yes, go to 17, No, go to 11)
- 11. Do you telephone people more than they call you?**
(Yes, go to 19, No, go to 17)
- 12. Do you have a baby face?**
(Yes, go to 19, No, go to 11)
- 13. Are you familiar with the order of the 12 traditional Chinese zodiacs**
(Yes, go to 22, No, go to 14)
- 14. Have you had more than**

- three men (or women) propose to you?**
(Yes, go to 24, No, go to 23)
- 15. Is there a mole on your posterior?**
(Yes, go to 16, No, go to 14)
- 16. Have you ever wanted to marry a person on first sight?**
(Yes, go to 24, No, go to 25)
- 17. Do you ever fantasize about going through a time tunnel to see the future?**
(Yes, go to 18, No, go to 26)
- 18. Have you ever gone on a blind date?**
(Yes, go to 25, No, go to 26)
- 19. Is all of your furniture white?**
(Yes, go to 26, No, go to 18)
- 20. Do you bring self-defense products with you?**
(Yes, Type B, No, Type A)
- 21. Are you confident when winking at others?**
(Yes, Type B, No, Type A)
- 22. Do you think it is proper to get married around 26?**
(Yes, go to 21, No, go to 20)
- 23. Do you hope that your lover can speak good English?**
(Yes, Type C, No, Type D)
- 24. Do you hope to visit the Great Wall if you've never been there?**
(Yes, Type D, No, Type C)
- 25. Do you often buy books and find them enjoyable?**
(Yes, Type E, No, go to 23)
- 26. When you get married, do you want to avoid having children for three years?**
(Yes, go to 24, No, go to 25)

Type A

You will marry early and have kids the same way

You will get married sooner than others to your age. Perhaps you mature earlier than your peers or do not understand emotions very much. The divorce rate in these cases is high. When these couples mature, they are likely to want to do everything for a second time.

If you meet a guy and think he is nice, do not be too passionate or pay less attention to your studies or work. You may regret it when you get older.

Type B

You will say, "I do," in your 30s. Although you think love is important, you do not want to commit quickly. As a result, your love is steady. When you do decide to marry, it will be after you turn 30. You will try your best to do what you want before 30. When you get married, you will devote yourself totally to your family.

Type C

You will tie the knot between 25 and 30

You are conservative and traditional. In your opinion, women should get married and have children when they are about 25, or

they will lose face. When you are in school or at work, you pay attention to friends of the opposite sex, trying your best to reach your important life target — getting married. In your marriage, you live with your heart and soul. But you need to pay attention that you are not easily drawn to cheating because of your desire to get married.

Type D

You will marry late or not at all

You don't pay much attention to love, because you think you have a lot more important things to do with your life than falling in love. Even if you do become smitten with somebody and get married, you will do it later. These kinds of people are often considered as hard persons or "lone nobles." Still, it is better to have a partner in life than to go it alone.

Type E

You do not need to be hitched

You are optimistic and know how to live better. You look younger than your actual age. In your opinion, marriage has nothing to do with your age. You can get married any time. When you finally marry, you insist on being free and keeping your ideals. So you need to find a person who feels the same way or it will never work.

(By Zhang Nan)



Photo by Jia Feimao

A lover's most valuable virtues

If you still do not know what qualities are the best in your partner, please consider our editors' and reporters' opinions. Every one of them is very experienced in love (wink, wink) or looking for love.

Gan Tian Sporty

Boyfriends should have big muscular chests and girlfriends should have huge breasts. To have these, you should have a sporty heart and always be willing to go to the sports. Yes!



He Jianwei Witty

Life is dull and boring. If my lover is clever and able to amuse me, it would be rosier.



Zhang Dongya Considerate

To be considerate is the most important thing for me, thoughtful of my needs, feelings and wishes instead of unconcerned and indifferent. It is better for him to know when and where to do the right thing. Am I being a little too picky? Maybe, but I really think a caring man is charming.



Jason Wang Respectful

Lovers should respect each other, and give each other space. This is essential for trust.

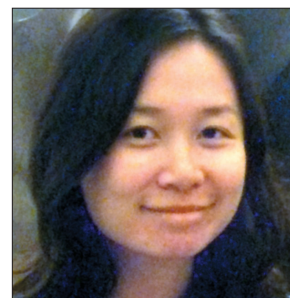


Yu Shanshan Sophisticated brain, boyish heart

I want to go out with a guy who is a normal adult. Neither a boy nor a pet for me to coddle, nor a father figure who is constantly teaching me, though some of those fatherly traits mixed into his personality would be perfect. I respect a person who knows clearly what he really wants and needs in life, and arranges his career and life cleverly, but who still keeps in touch with his inner child. A mix of playful, light imagination and an interest in new things. Impossible to find? I hope not.

Annie Wei Decent

What is the most important characteristic of a lover on Valentine's Day? I just hope he is a decent enough person. That means he is honest in a relationship, considerate, generous and knows when to keep his mouth shut!



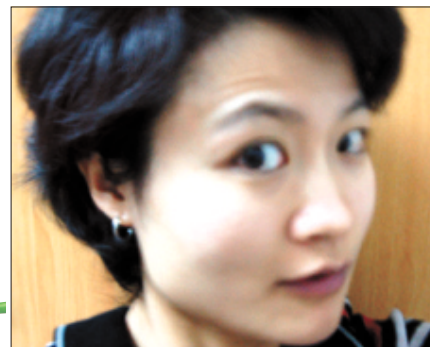
Li Fenghua Male~leading

I want a male-led relationship, but I am far from a passive woman. I need to be able to deeply respect the man I am giving my submission to. I need to see him in control of himself, respect his integrity and the values with which he conducts his life, and feel secure in the quality of his loving leadership. When confronted by a problem in the relationship, he works to resolve the problem instead of withdrawing or turning angry.



Joe Edwards Money

I am looking for a lovely Chinese lady who is beautiful, rich and too proud to have her husband work! My phone number is ...



Jackie Zhang Dependable

A man should be dependable like a rock. He makes me feel safe and comfortable. I can go to him whenever difficulties arise for help and relief. Though sometimes he may not be able to give me any practical or available solution, just a few words of comfort are all I expect to feel peaceful again.

